

Puck

Entered at N. Y. P. O. as Second-class Mail Matter



DECLINED WITH THANKS.

MRS. G. O. P.—Be seated, Mr. Cleveland!

MR. C.—Thank you, Madam, but I have a better chair handy!



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Editor - - - - - H. C. Bunner.

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CARTOONS AND COMMENTS.

CONCERNING THE PANAMA AFFAIR.

ONE WHO has observed late French affairs from across an ocean or two must have found it hard to realize that those hot-headed people were not conducting a dress rehearsal for a comic opera. The idea of theatrical properties, of tights and mock ermine and plumed hats and shiny tin armor and lime lights has persistently obtruded itself. By the aid of the shifting calcium we have seen the leading characters doing their solos and duets, the many-tongued populace trooping on to voice its confused sentiments, and operatic villains flitting about mysteriously in the background — these last being Pretenders, who have nothing left but moth-eaten pretensions. A stock headline has been "Proceedings Opened Amid an Indescribable Babble of Shouts, Jeers and Cheers." Whenever the frothy turmoil showed signs of subsiding, some rabid and ambitious deputy assailed the Government or a colleague with a deadly insult. It was a poor day that was not enlivened with a few insults of the deadliest character. And how promptly they were resented, and how wonderful are the antiseptic properties of that funny French duel, in the matter of honor-wounds! Ministries have advanced and receded with all the grace and ease of the dissolving views at a magic-lantern entertainment. M. Dumas should have written of the first days of the Panama Investigation; but now comes some work in the line of M. Zola. The first note of ugly and tragic realism has been sounded, a note that gives to the performance the dignity of grand opera, and relieves the French government of a plausible charge of insincerity.

Of the men who have been convicted and sentenced, a pathetic interest centers in Count Ferdinand de Lesseps, — an interest which will unjustly tend to eclipse sympathy for the impoverished thousands who blindly loaned their money to his good name. The measure of his guilt can never be known, because no court can weigh his case in ethical scales. Just when, if ever, he became convinced of the impracticability of the Panama

scheme, and, therefore, consciously guilty, it would probably be impossible for himself to say. One of the most illustrious figures in the later prosperity of France, he has been found guilty of swindling and breach of trust. He has already received his punishment. Confiscation of his fraudulent gains and his few days of freedom are unimportant. The defilement of that glowing page in history which his achievements had assured him is the crushing blow. Although posterity will perhaps good-naturedly prefer to couple his name with Suez rather than Panama, his fame is indelibly smirched. Nasty as the affair has been, it has, or should have, taught several lessons. The Frenchman should have gained a sturdier faith in the stability of his republic, a wholesome sense of the inadequacy of his entire judicial system, and a lasting distrust of those immense speculative enterprises that are so apt to engage his mercurial mind. In connection with Italy's bank scandal, some significant rumblings from several other European nations, and the fact that there is to be an American end to the Panama Investigation, it should have taught anew that people who habitually use building material of glasslike fragility can not safely indulge in stone-throwing.

CONCERNING THE SILVER LAW

Speaking of comic opera, your attention is invited to a remarkable feature of the last act of that domestic production entitled "The Fifty-second Congress." Here you may see the humiliating spectacle of two bodies of men, entrusted by the people with the nation's welfare, refusing to repeal a law which a majority of them, including its distinguished author, recognizes as a deadly menace to the nation's credit, in order to secure a partisan advantage. Mindful that our good name goes with our gold, these men have decided it to be good politics to keep the silver question open for the next Congress to shut. They argue, with a logic peculiarly Republican: "The country is in a hole; let us dig the hole deeper, and make the sides slippery, so that those whom the people have so unanimously and foolishly chosen to follow us, may have a harder time to pull it out." After this act of shameless bad faith, the richest government in the world is forced to borrow a few tons of gold from New York banks, and there is some cheerful talk about an issue of interest-bearing bonds. Meanwhile, we are accumulating a fine but useless stock of pig silver.

Eminently characteristic, is it not, of the Grand Old Party of Moral Ideas? And how nicely it shows the elastic possibility of moral ideas that have been allowed to rot. It is a fitting wind-up for a session of Congress whose ineffective tactics have made it an expensive luxury for its employers. We do not doubt that most of the possible bad effects of this mean policy are nullified by the near advent of an administration so rich in promise of wise and vigorous legislation. And we do not doubt that one of the first acts of that administration will be to repair our public and private credit by freeing the country from its dangerous silver law.

THEY SCORN THE CALENDAR.



MR. PROSY. — I should think it would be dreadful to be a policeman, and to have to be out in such frightful weather.

MR. PROSY. — Oh, my dear! Times and seasons mean nothing to them. Why, they began taking their Summer vacations on the 10th of February this year!

FRIGID AFFECTION.

CONSTANCE. — I hear that your Boston friend, Athenia Hubbs, met her affinity the other day.

ESTELLE. — Where?

CONSTANCE. — In going downtown she came across a snow-man.

TO THE SAME EFFECT.

SPRECKELS. — You don't think that Hawaiian public men have been corruptly influenced to favor annexation, do you?

SHECKELS. — Well — eh — I don't know; it seems to be very largely a question of sugar with them.

MINNESOTA'S OWN blizzards, rather than her legislative wind, will be most effective in suppressing the hoop-skirt nuisance.

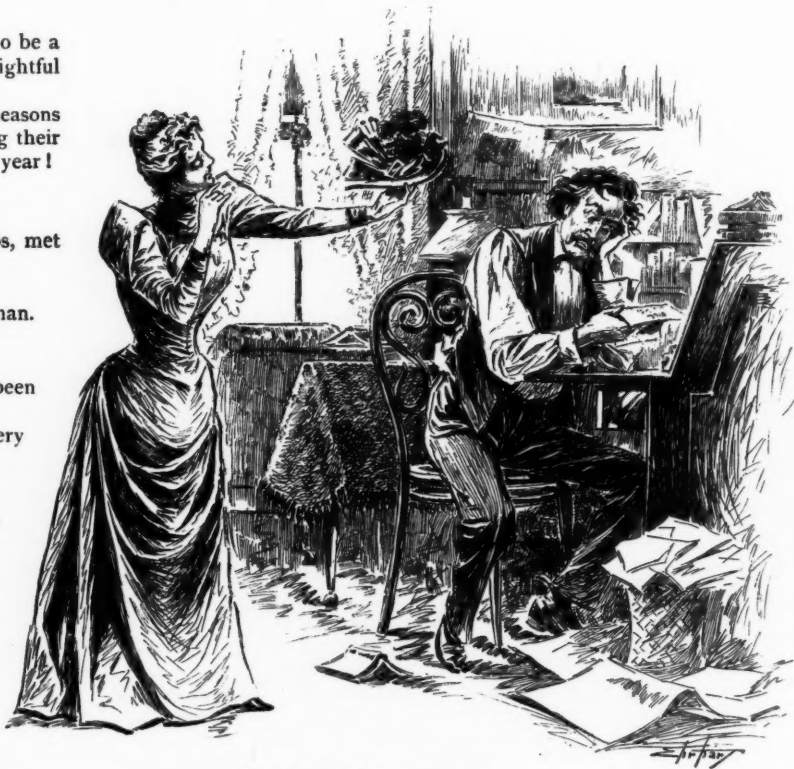
"I THINK THAT Uncle Sam and Miss Canada should be wedded by annexation."

"What Winters we will have when that happens and she plants her cold feet against Uncle Sam's back!"

NEXT TO NOTHING — One Degree Above Zero.

UPSON DOWNES. — New York is most certainly growing more moral.

ROWNE DE BOUT. — I should say so. When a fellow goes out for a night, he meets no one but preachers and Sunday-school teachers.



MORE MONEY IN IT.

MRS. POETICUS. — Is n't this hat a poem, dear?

POETICUS (sadly, as he looks at the bill). — I wish I could write that kind.

RATHER PREVIOUS.



"Look! There is absolutely the hoop-skirt at last!"



"Gracious!! It was only the heater!"

A LIBRARY VESTAL.



LOW DREAMS away the golden afternoon,
Slant sunlight in the rafters alcove floats,
A tangled mist of shifting beams and motes,
Like pollen-gold that streaks the brooks in June.
I sit enchanted by some ancient rune
Or oaten pipe with its six bird-like throats,
Some shepherd-poet breathing sylvan notes,
Or Bacchus votary singing love and wine.

A soft, light step—I raise my eyes, and, lo!
A dream, a vision, slipt from poet's page,
A white-necked vestal of the Attic age,
Around whose brows the double fillets flow.
"We close at six." (Ye gods! she serves for wage!)
"The clock is striking now, and you must go."
Paul Pastnor.

A POST-BELLUM HERO.

"I did n't know Corclegg was a soldier. How long was his term of service?"
"Nearly thirty years—ever since the war, in fact."

CHOKED OFF.

"I'm very short. Could n't you—"
"No, sir. I can't add a cubit to any man's stature."



PROFESSION VS. NATIONALITY.

IMMIGRANT INSPECTOR.—Your nationality, please.
IMMIGRANT.—Oirish.
IMMIGRANT INSPECTOR.—What is your occupation?
IMMIGRANT.—Oi'm a Frinch nurse.

FEBRUARY TWENTY-SECOND.

As comes thy birthday, conquering shade!
No humorist omits
The historic little hatchet's aid
To sharpen up his wits.



AN EXPOSÉ.

MRS. LAKESIDE (at breakfast).—O John! your sleeve is torn.
MR. LAKESIDE.—Good Heavens, Emmy! I'm glad you noticed it. I'm going to take dinner at Porkingham's house to-night, and you can imagine how mortified I would feel sitting down at a dinner table with a shirt in this condition.

DID N'T ESCAPE.

INSPECTOR (at the penitentiary).—I understand that measles broke out three days ago.
WARDEN.—Yes; but the guards caught them!

A MISSIONARY.

HENNESSEY.—Poor Doc. is a terrible drunkard.
PEPPER.—Yes; and yet he has done a great deal of good in the world.
HENNESSEY.—How?
PEPPER.—Almost every time he gets drunk he swears off with someone, and now and then one of the fellows he swears off with keeps his pledge.



IN A FIGHT between a porcupine and a bull dog recently, the latter was severely outpointed.



THE PRIZE OF PROPRIETY.

Retold from the French of
M. GUY DE MAUPASSANT

by
H. C. BUNNER.

THE STORY of the Prize of Propriety was told in an old French town, by an old French doctor, a plump little man with rosy cheeks, and short, bristling gray hair standing up straight all over his head, and a short, bristling gray beard standing out straight all around his face. He had a perpetual twinkle in his eyes, and the corners of his mouth looked as though they would like to wink. He sat on the parapet, that was built in the time of Julius Cæsar, and told the story with countless grimaces, and with a Frenchman's artistic enjoyment of his own recital. It was a town that had been famous many centuries ago, and that has since been many centuries forgotten. Its narrow streets ran between tall, old-fashioned stone houses, and twisted this way and that, up and down incredible grades, following necessities of an antiquity past comprehending.



The sunlight glinted on the swift little blue river that ran under the arches of the old stone bridge; here and there, over the high garden walls that bordered it, showed the top of a blossoming pear-tree, or a spray of peach, reaching up into the free air, and the soft Spring breeze brought on its breast a faint smell of lilacs and new grass and upturned mould.

And this is the story of the Prize of Propriety, given once on a time by Madame Husson:

"You would hardly think," began the Doctor, "that we inhabitants of this little town of Gisors, who still talk of the glories of our city in the days of the Romans; of its present superiority to the rival city of Gournay, at the other end of the valley; and who, to this very day, discuss and experiment with mediæval receipts for cooking eggs and making pasties — you would not believe that we had ever been accused of being a frivolous and ill-conducted populace.

"Yet such we were in the sight of Mme. Husson, a very rich and very respectable middle-aged lady who once dwelt among us many years ago. When I tell you that Mme. Husson was the only child of an old couple who had successfully conducted a young ladies' institute for English Misses; that she had in her first youth married a consumptive drawing-master who had expired after six months of marital life; and that his widow had spent the twenty-five years that had elapsed since that date in one long series of religious exercises in memory of the defunct, you will understand that Mme. Husson was not of the world worldly. She took, however, a kindly if somewhat narrow, interest in her fellow-beings, and, at the time when she settled in Gisors, she had come into possession of her parents' considerable fortune, and had reached the charitable stage, where she was anxious to do great things with her money; and to do them, moreover, in the fussy way that middle-aged ladies delight in.

"Now, I can not tell you, for I have forgotten, if I ever knew, in what chaste bower, in what secluded retreat of innocence, Mme. Husson had spent the twenty-five years of her widowhood; but I know that the good people of Gisors impressed her as being reckless and shameless in their public manners, to the verge of apparent profligacy. Our simple, hearty, noisy, Norman ways; our Middle-Age phrases, a little too strong and racy for the modern taste; our big appetites and our big talk all shocked and offended her, and made her regard us as gross and sensual people of questionable morals, at the very best.

"Most of all, it horrified her to look out of her window upon the public market-place and see the market-women, the farm-girls, the dairymaids and the daughters of the peasantry jostling each other, laughing,



shrieking, chaffing, scolding and quarrelling in their rough, jovial way; and when two great strapping wenches would come to blows and exchanged a few harmless love-taps with their big, bare red arms flying through the air, Mme. Husson would close her shutters and send her maid, Joconde, for the *sal volatile*.

"It was not, therefore, much wondered at in Gisors when it was announced that Mme. Husson had decided to offer a prize of virtue to the young woman bearing the best character in the town, to present that happy paragon with a rosy wreath and a purse of gold; in fact, to establish here the whole institution of the *rosière* with its attendant festivities. And as this simply meant that the town was to feed itself at the expense of its benefactress, joy, gratitude and satisfaction ran high in Gisors.

"But, as time went on, and no further steps were taken in the matter, the people began to grow curious and suspicious; and inquiries were made, which shortly proved that Joconde, the maid, was at the bottom of the strange delay.

"This Joconde most notably belied her name. She was a sour-visaged spinster, even more of a rigid, uncompromising, narrow-minded moralist than was her mistress. In her eyes there were just two absolutely untainted and faultless females in the whole world — Mme. Husson and herself — and it behooved even them to be careful and walk straightly. To Joconde had been entrusted the task of making inquiry into the reputation of the local damsels, and she had performed her duties with absolutely fanatical zeal. Her standard was, of course, the loftiest. She demanded decorum, modesty of bearing, and absolute propriety in the smallest details of speech and conduct — qualities not often to be found among a lot of hard-working, honest, ignorant, rough-living daughters of poverty. Joconde inquired everywhere, caught up every bit of gossip, every vague suspicion, every malicious hint, and noted all down in the little memorandum book in which she inscribed the articles of her day's marketing. Here," said the Doctor, opening a capacious wallet, "is a copy of the page of that famous memorandum book which I have carried with me these many years:"

bread	4 sous	Rosalie Vatinel called Françoise Piénoir
milk 1 pt.	2 "	a vile language
Butter	8 "	Radishes
Malvina Levesque got herself Talked		vinegar
about last year. tickling the buttermans		Joséphine Dardent aint had nothing
Boy in the ribs done it.		said only she gets Letters from the young
chops	1 franc	Man was turned out of the Pickle Shop
salt	2 sous	last spring.

"Every entry like one of these settled the fate of a victim. And as there was no girl whatever about whom someone had not, at some time, said some unkind thing, it very soon became obvious that Gisors could not furnish a young woman up to the wonderful standard of propriety exacted by Mme. Husson and her maid.

The surrounding towns were ransacked with no better success.

"And one morning Joconde said to her mistress:

"Madame, if any one is to get that prize, Isidore is the only one who deserves it — and he's a man — leastways, a boy. He never done nor said nor thought nothing improper in all his whole life, I'll be bound."

"Madame Husson pondered long over this curious suggestion. There was no doubt about Isidore's qualifications, save in the matter of sex. He was a great, gawky boy of twenty, whose mother kept a fruit-stand in the market-place. Isidore's invincible, positively morbid bashfulness, had made him, in a way, the butt of the town. He had passed his youth at his mother's apron-strings, and he had no companions of his own age, even among the boys with whom he had grown up. The sight of a girl was enough to suffuse his face with painful blushes and to paralyze his never-too-ready tongue. His sensitive and shrinking delicacy of speech and behavior, at an age when most boys do their best to be taken as little monsters of vulgarity and iniquity, had attracted the attention of all the town's-people. You see, Gisors is, after all, not a very large place. The consequence was that Isidore was known among the coarse-spoken town's-folk of the baser sort as a milk-sop and goody-goody, and was made an object of general persecution. The girls laughed and winked at him; the boys hailed him with broad jests as he sat behind the piles of fruit at his mother's little shop. Isidore blushed and bore it.

"Mme. Husson could not make up her mind. A rosy wreath for the head of a young man was a development of her plans that she had not





ALARMING, IF TRUE.

JUSTICE.—How do you explain your being found inside Colonel Ginger's chicken coop last night?

LEFTOVER JACKSON.—De truht is, Jedge, I made all ma 'rangements ter git up 'arly in the mohnin', and I wanted ter sleep whah I cud heah de roosters crow.

HUMBLY SUBMITTED.

YOU 'RE pretty and proud enough, I know,
To have the world 'at your feet;
But you could n't be dearer, even so,
Nor wiser, nor yet more sweet.

The world is hollow, too, I hear,
And courtiers oft untrue;
And cares of state can curly heads
Like yours sometimes undo.

Won't you find it nicer every way
To scorn such sovereignty,
To be Queen of the Land of Everyday
And one loyal subject—Me?

Dorothea Lummis.

ACCORDING TO THE WEATHER.

"Norah! Norah! An' where are yez goin' wid only wan rubber on?"

"Wan rubber 's enough, Mother! Shure, an' it 's not so very muddy!"

ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM.

NIBSON.—What is Hopper so blue about? Has he met with some misfortune?

BILSON.—No; but his friend Gaylor has had twenty-five thousand dollars left to him.

AN EXPENSIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT.



MR. K. NINE.—Yes; he is very bashful before strangers, but he obeys everything I say to him. Stand up, Rover!

AIR-SHAFT ECHOES.

MRS. BOYLE (by tenement telephone).—Mrs. Doyle, an' have yez notisht a shtrange shmell about the neeghborhood the lasht few days?

MRS. DOYLE.—An' sure 'n' I have. An' it ain't biled cabbage, nayther.

MRS. BOYLE.—'T is with a feelin' of shame I say that it 's sourkraut. (In awed whisper.) Mrs. Doyle, there do be a Ditch fam'l'y on the fourt flure, back.

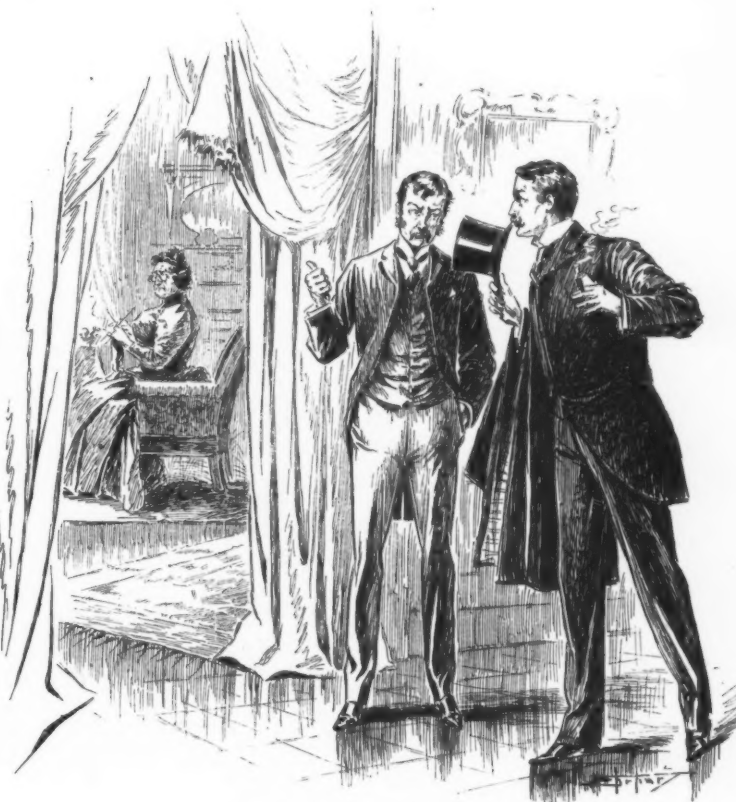
SO HE HAD.

EDITOR (reaching for his walking stick).—So you are the person who sends the poems from Polecat Hollow?

THE POET (with pride).—I am he, indeed; and I came down to subscribe for your paper.

EDITOR (agitated).—Oh—er—allow me then, sir, to present to you this cane, as a token of my esteem! I purchased it expressly for you.

"THIS WORLD IS but a fleeting show,"
Said a maiden coy and bright.
Just then she struck the ice and fell,
And they thought that she was right.



FIRE VS. SMOKE.

KEY.—Why, West! No smoking in the house? Is n't this a new departure?

WEST.—No; a new arrival—my mother-in-law.



— ! — ! — ! — ! —

contemplated. And yet, if she rejected Isidore, all her great dream for doing good and setting depraved Gisors a virtuous example must go for nothing. She consulted her Father Confessor.

"Why, my dear Madame," said that good gentleman, thinking it over with the assistance of a pinch of snuff; "I see nothing out of the way in the idea. Propriety knows no sex, or rather it may be an attribute of either sex. Certainly no human being was ever more proper than Isidore. Why, I don't believe the boy has ever drunk anything stronger than milk in his life; and he can not be accused of setting a bad example to the rest of our young people."

"That decided Mme. Husson. She called on the Maire of Gisors, and that functionary highly approved. Show me the municipal functionary who does not highly approve of giving the tax-payers a right good holiday and festival — when it does n't cost the town anything.

"We'll make a great occasion of it, of course," he said. "We'll decorate the public square; and, yes, we'll have the military out, and get up a procession."

"They fixed the date of the ceremony for the 15th of August as being at once the festival of the Virgin Mary and of the Emperor Napoléon.

"When Isidore was consulted about it, he blushed and appeared pleased.

"Well might he be pleased! It was his hour of triumph. The girls who had laughed at him, the boys who had jeered him, found the tables turned upon them. It is all

very well to laugh at a fellow for a milk-sop and a goody-goody, but when milk-sopery and goody-goodness bring a fellow in five hundred francs, a savings-bank-book, a gold watch, a public dinner, municipal and military honors, and a large increase in the fellow's mother's fruit trade, why, a fellow is neither to be laughed at nor sneezed at, even if he does happen to be a little straight-laced.



"It was the 15th of August. The long main street leading to the market-place of Gisors was hung with banners and draperies its whole length. In the market-place itself were spread the long gayly-decked tables for the general collation, — their snowy covering contrasting bravely with the crimson-striped awnings and other canopies that stretched above them, supported by painted and gilded flag-poles that bore streaming banners high in the Summer air. With a thunder of martial music, the Gisors Grenadiers swept into the square.

"Dividing the great crowd that had already gathered, the military pride of Gisors marched on, flags flying and drums beating; drew up before the humble shop of Isidore's mother, and presented arms as Isidore appeared at the portal. He was dressed from head to foot in spotless, immaculate white, with a bunch of orange-blossoms in his white straw hat.

"With the Maire of the town on one side and Mme. Husson radiant, trembling with excitement, on the other, Isidore advanced and took his place in the procession. Amid the cheers of the populace, following the rolling music of the Grenadier band, they moved onward toward the cathedral. In front of Isidore a detachment of very little girls indeed strewed flowers in his pathway — white, chaste, virginal flowers. Isidore marched on with a happy smile upon his pale, innocent face, and the crowd cheered again and again.

"There were brief services at the cathedral, and a touching address by the officiating cleric; and then the procession, returning to the market-place, took seats at the tables under the canopies.

"Before the collation began the Maire made his address. It was dignified and imposing.

"The honor that your benefactress and your town extend to you, young man, is also, in some sense, an obligation upon you. In the face of this vast multitude who have met to acclaim your triumph as an example of virtue, propriety and decorum, you must be considered to have taken upon yourself a high and sacred engagement to keep that bright example shining in undiminished purity and splendor before the eyes of this community, from now even unto your latest day."

"Then stepping solemnly forward, he pressed the young man to his bosom and set the wreath of roses on his head; and Isidore sobbed, sobbed with a vague, innocent, ignorant joy and pride. Then the Maire put into his hands the silken purse that contained his five hundred francs in gold, his savings bank-book, his gold watch and the freedom of the town of Gisors enclosed in a silver casket. The last gifts had been purchased by popular subscription.

"The repast was magnificent, too magnificent. It was a repast of the true Norman style, with countless dishes and immense portions; and we gulped it down in good Norman style, floating it on its way in floods of rich golden cider and generous red wine, while the glasses clinked, the

plates clashed, the knives and forks rattled, and the Grenadier band poured forth its music all the time that it was not eating or drinking — which indeed was no inconsiderable time, for we sat at those tables from high noon until the soft, warm evening's mist came rolling up our narrow streets from the low pasture lands about the town, bringing with them a pleasant country smell and faint, far-off sounds of tinkling bells and lowing cattle.

"And then we took Isidore home. Poor boy, no one seemed to have noticed that this child of temperance and frugality had been eating all the day as he had never eaten before — since never before had he seen such viands — and, moreover, drinking all day, as unquestionably he had never drunk before — a glass of thin wine having, probably, been a rare and extreme indulgence with him. And there he had sat from twelve to from six to seven, and with one or another of the thoughtless, excited, warm-hearted, heavy drinkers about him, poor Isidore had drunk every one of the score of toasts with which the banquet concluded — and heaven knows how much more beside.

"Still, the nervous excitement of the occasion kept him up; and save for the glitter of his eyes and the color in his cheek he seemed to those who marched with him to that little fruit-shop to be quite his usual, undemonstrative, silent self. His mother was not yet come home; a little band of friends was accompanying her from house to house to show her son's wreath and to receive the congratulations of her neighbors. There was also a plan on foot to close the festivities with a grand serenade to Mme. Husson. So it happened that Isidore was somewhat unceremoniously deposited in the darkened shop while the unsatisfied merry-makers of his guard-of-honor hurried on to the next excitement.

"So Isidore was left alone in the dim half-darkness of the shop. A little light filtered in through the cracks of the door, enough to show him the heaping baskets of peaches, the melons piled on the floor, the late Summer fruits spread out in attractive order on the shelves and counters. The smell of them mingled in that small, warm room in one musky intoxicating odor. It mounted to the boy's brain as he sat there and drew labored breaths of the close, rich, enervating air. He felt the clean cold cover of his bank-book, he twirled his watch in his hand, and its bright surface caught the light from a shutter-chink. As he dropped his chain it fell with a pleasant musical sound upon his silver box. But he must have sat longest of all playing with the purse of gold, and making its bright orange stream ripple beneath the silken meshes, as he softly cascaded it from hand to hand.

"For then and there in the darkness the Devil seized upon him and rent him. How long the struggle between his good and bad angels may have been no man may know; nor what agony of spirit worked within him in the murky depths of the close little fruit-shop. But when his mother returned to greet her boy, he was gone and had left no trace behind him — not even one orange flower from his white straw hat.

She hurried to the house of Mme. Husson, and, with Joconde to help them through the crowds that still surged aimlessly about the streets, they went to find the Maire. He could give them no information, however, nor could the officers of the police. The news got out, and within an hour the whole town was looking for Isidore, with the extravagant animation of people who take their first delightful taste of a mystery. A

general alarm was sent out. The Colonel of the Grenadiers despatched scouting-parties to make the external circuit of the town. One of these discovered on the Paris road the spray of orange-blossoms. For the rest of the night, half of the inhabitants of Gisors sat up comparing conjectures with each other, and discussing the possibilities of the young man's having met with foul play.

"On the evening of the next day, when the regular stage-coach got in on its return from Paris, the people of Gisors learned the truth. Isidore had hailed the conveyance a mile out of town, had paid his fare out of his purse of gold, and, traveling all night, had reached Paris in the morning; and had got off and disappeared in the streets of the great city as though it were the most natural place in the world for a man in a white, spotless suit of duck.

"The authorities tried their best, but they could get no further trace of the boy. Weeks passed on, and nothing occurred to shed the slightest light upon the mystery.

"I was then the youngest physician in town, and I happened to be the only person stirring in the street very early one Fall morning. As I entered the market-place, I suddenly saw a curious dark-gray figure, in its



gait and carriage more like a baboon than a man, come staggering around a distant corner. It fell even as I saw it, and I hurried forward. Reaching the inanimate form, I tried to lift it. It was a man sunk in the depths



of a profound alcoholic stupor, with an empty brandy bottle clutched in his hand; but it was some time before I realized that the bloated, swollen, bruised, be-smirched face belonged to Isidore. The beautiful white duck suit was a hideous skeleton of filthy rags; and the whole creature, dress and person, was a mass of filth, soilure and disfigurement, marked with every stain and spot that can be left on a man by the inexpressible foulness of a great city's lowest slums. I called for help and got him home to his mother's. He was washed, healed, fed, set up-right again, and given another chance to behave himself. He had nothing with him — absolutely nothing of all his gold and silver — except the freedom of the town, no longer in its silver casket, but tucked away, dirty itself, in a dirtier pocket.

"We suspected, however, that he had some small portion of his money hidden somewhere outside the city limits, for when, a few days afterward, he escaped from his mother's vigilance and got outside the town, he came back shortly, drunk, and with money enough in his pocket to get still more drunk — in fact, to go on such a spree as no mortal man had ever yet gone on in the streets of Gisors. A month later he repeated this performance, and breaking of windows was the smallest irregularity he committed. This occurred again from time to time, until the city officials, having exhausted all the minor punishments they could bestow upon him, ordered him to leave the town. It was then that Isidore marched into the council-chamber and produced the freedom of the town that had been given him with his prize of propriety — and asked the municipality of Gisors what action it proposed to take in the matter.

"He remained the town drunkard until he died," concluded the little doctor, getting down off the parapet of the bridge; "and when I closed his eyes, the town paid my bill."

BEAUTY'S BARRIER.

When she from Paris had returned,
A circling crinoline around her,
My heart with hopeless passion burned,
For unapproachable I found her.

John Ludlow.



OVERWORK.

ROONEY.—Say, Pat, ye're a bit of a scholar, kin ye tell me who it was ordered the sun to shtand still?

NOONAN.—I dunno. Some son of a gun of a contrahctor who wanted to git a big day's work out of the laborin' man, ye kin bet.



A GREAT INSTITUTION.

NEWLY-ARRIVED FRENCHMAN (getting his first sight of a New York news-stand).—Parbleu! Zis must be ze "Freedom of ze American Press," of which zey have told me so often!

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave,"
This saw a pessimistic poet gave;
But why despair? for he forgot to say
That paths inglorious lead the self-same way.



REVERY.

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"
But still the words most sad to me,
Also, are these: "It used to be!"

WHY HE NEVER CALLED AGAIN.

WALTER EGO.—You must n't believe everything you hear about me.
GLADYS GONE.—Of course not. I never hear anything about you, except what you tell me.

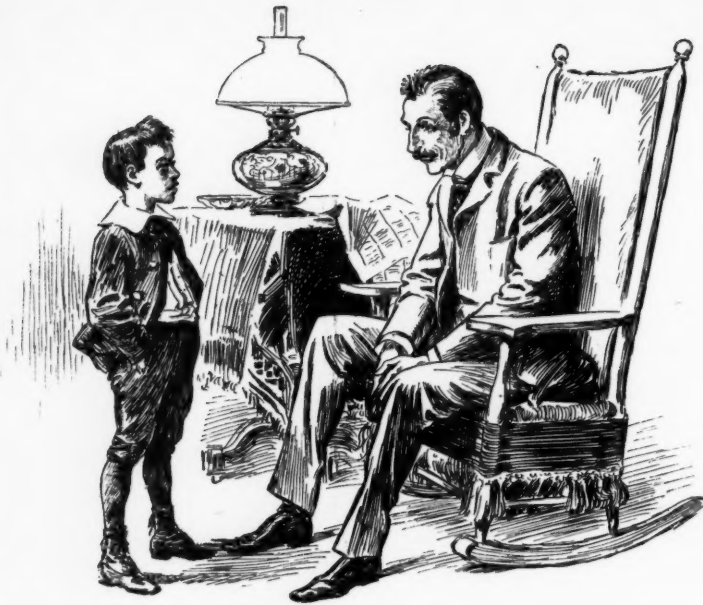
THE ATTRACTION OF gravitation probably accounts for the popularity of the toboggan slide.

AT YULE-TIDE in Hawaii it is Santa Claus Spreckels.

IN THE GRAND circus of New Jersey real estate there is no such thing as "ground tumbling."







IT IS DIFFERENT NOW.

FATHER.—Remember, my son, George Washington became the greatest and most beloved man our country ever produced; and yet he never told a lie.

SON.—Yes, Father; but he did n't have so much competition as us boys have.

MR. MCALLISTER AND THE DRAMA.

IS THERE a future for the drama? Just as Despair is doing an unseemly skirt-dance above expiring Hope, Mr. Ward McAllister steps modestly forward and arrests the process of dissolution with a suggestion that is positively but little short of human in its intelligence. Let Despair take the customary two weeks' notice, while Hope, re-animated, cavorts decorously to the stately measure of Mr. McAllister's propaganda. He first calls attention to the present deplorable state of affairs:

"What! after a good dinner eaten in agreeable company, am I to go to the theatre to be crushed and pushed and trampled and to be breathed upon by men full of bad beer and whiskey? It is not reasonable to expect it, and it would be very foolish of me to do so."

Haw, demmit! Of cawse not. Anyone familiar with the very ordinary class of people who nightly throng Mr. Daly's or Mr. Palmer's, or the other well known sink holes of iniquity which pass for theatres in New York, could not expect it of him. The spectacle of Mr. McAllister "in a stall, you know," with coarse persons coming forward from five and six rows back to blow liquor-tainted breath at him, and to walk over him "with their dirty shoes," and to punch his patrician, partridge-thatched ribs with their plebeian umbrellas, is beastly shocking, you know. It's enough to make the stoutest heart quail, Begad! or to do anything else suggestive of extreme horror that a well-bred stout heart may think of, you know.

He next discloses the secret of these disreputable gatherings:

"The regular theatre-goers and first-nighters are not society persons. One may go to a first-class theatre and look around and not see any of the persons one knows, you know."

That's it; there's the trouble! One can't see one that one knows, if one tries one's hardest. The audience is mere rabble, who can never be Society Persons, because they are hampered by br—er—well, just because they can't be, don't you know.

But the stage has found its salvation in the Society Person. Here is the plan of Mr. McAllister, who is no end of a Society Person:

"I think a certain space of what is now occupied by the orchestra chairs should be set apart in every good theatre for those who wish to go dressed. This space should be filled with broad, comfortable arm-chairs, arranged in rows. . . . It should be obligatory on the men to wear evening dress in these seats. Our women would be disinclined

at first to wear low-necked dresses. In time, no doubt, they would accept the English standard and appear at the theatre in their handsomest evening dress. Then society people would go to the theatre to see one another, as well as to see the play. . . . Clean, well-dressed people who come in carriages and cabs, would fill the best seats. . . . The company of plenty of well-bred people would have a beneficial effect on the hogs, who would, of course, be present in considerable numbers, even in the best seats. These persons would at least be in evening dress, which would make them less disagreeable "[of cawse, of cawse]" to the eye."

Then comes this masterly summing up:

"The attendance of society people at the theatres dressed in their best would elevate the drama as nothing else could, and give the actors a knowledge of the fashionable world which would be invaluable to them. Solecisms in speech and manners would perhaps cease. The actors and their acting would be improved by contact with well-bred people, and society would be better amused."

What wild enthusiast would have dreamed of evolving a drama so perfect that clean, well-dressed Society Persons would go in carriages to see it and to See One Another?

Truly, the drama must be apotheosized to the highest point of truth, strength and purity when the ladies in the first six rows bare what is comprehensively termed their "shoulders." Is it too much to hope for? I think not; for, mark the humanizing influence of the dress suit: if an ordinary dress suit with baggy knees, dandruff on the collar, and sporadic traces of bouillon down the front, can render a hog tolerable to a person of Mr. McAllister's exquisite sensibility, it is not incredible that it should force a higher order of drama.

But, I say, you know, it's really no end of a blooming flunk not to carry the idea to a logical completion. Why not put the — er — Society Persons on the stage, where their refined, pretty ways can be properly observed; and, since the play's *not* the thing, put the demnition play-actors down in the orchestra, don't you see?

Or, better still, put the — er — Society Persons out in the lobby, with a jolly bit of a brass railing about them, you know, where the middle classes can go out between the acts and feed them chicken croquettes and *marrons glacés*, and point their blooming sticks at them and study the only correct thing, don't you see.

Or, still better, have waxen effigies of people of the right sort, you know, in convenient niches about the playhouse, so that a demned cad of a gas-fitter or a poet can drop two shillin's into the phonographic chest of a hand-made McAllister, and hear it say "Haw! What shockin' bad fawm!"

Of course, the reform comes too late to make anything of Mr. Booth or Mr. Jefferson; but we have other good material growing up. Who knows? After our actors have had an opportunity to study that cultured elegance which is so typical of the Society Person, we may be able to get some good out of Shakspeare; and, in the same school, Mr. Bronson Howard may learn to write good plays.

And Mr. McAllister says it has got to be done right away, too, if it's ever done, because Lent is coming on.

H. L. Wilson.



"POKING FUN AT HIM."



HE WAS SLIGHTLY MISTAKEN.

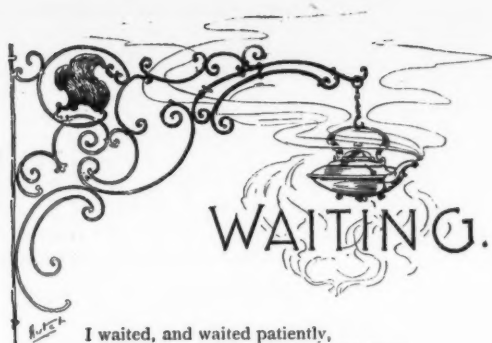
BEFORE MARRIAGE.

"Since I have known you, Miss Fairweather, I feel that henceforth no other girl will ever have the power to make my heart beat faster!"



AFTER MARRIAGE.

The first girl they had not only made his heart beat faster, but made his teeth chatter, as well.



I waited, and waited patiently,
I waited, and waited and waited long
For the old tin kettle to gladden me
To the core with its ever cheerful song;
For I wanted a soothing punch to brew
While the Winter whirlwind whistled and blew.

The punch a delicate odor gave,
Suggesting the languorous Orient;
I bobbed on the crest of pleasure's wave
As over the steaming glass I bent,
And waited some twenty minutes, I think,
For the thing to get cool enough to drink.

R. K. M.

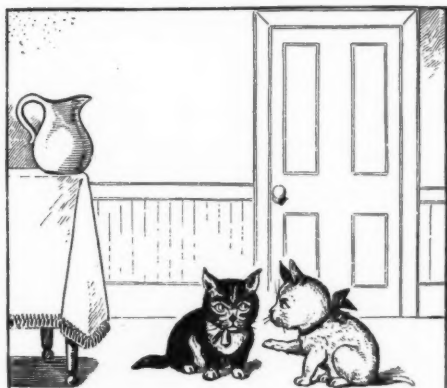
A RICH FIELD.

PEARY.—Where is Stanley now; in darkest Africa?

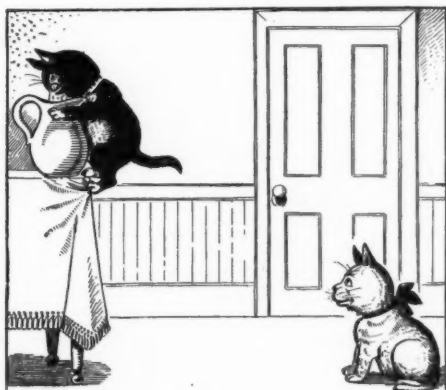
GILDER.—No; in darkest Oblivion.

PEARY.—He should find some good material for a book there.

A CATS-PAW.



FIRST PUSSY.—You're no good, anyhow. I'll bet you can't jump upon that table and see what is in that pitcher of cream.



SECOND PUSSY.—Can't I, though!

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A SHREWD MOVE.

The crinoline will soon begin
Such lovely secrets to disclose,
That dealers now are laying in
A fine supply of silken hose.

John Ludlow.

THE BUSINESS OF POLITICS.

WHOLESALE — Selling out the Candidate.
RETAIL — Buying the Voter.

GROUND FOR DISBELIEF.

"I can't believe that Washington is the Father of this country, ye know," remarked the visiting Englishman.

"Why not?" asked the resident native.

"Because it is said that he could n't tell a lie."

POLITICAL GRAMMAR.

REPUBLICAN, *Nominative*.

DEMOCRAT, *Possessive*.

PROHIBITIONIST, *Objective*.

THE CITY GOVERNMENT'S CRITERION.

CITIZEN.—The streets of New York are in a disgraceful condition.

OFFICIAL.—Tut! Tut! They are nahthin' teh the bog roads of Oireland.

"HERE'S A shocking lack of reciprocity!"

"What's up?"

"I've looked all through the Bible, and there is n't a single verse about the *Mail and Express*."

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A WINTER IDYL.

Old King Coal was a merry old soul,

And a merry old soul was he;

He called in his clerks, and he marked up the toll
Per ton, dollars one, two, three.

William Henry Siviter.



FIRST PUSSY.—That cat certainly is a jay. It won't be any harm for me to help Bridget get this cream up off the carpet.

HOTEL TRAYMORE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.
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College City of New York.

MANAGER.—What's the row?

ASSISTANT.—The two-headed boy is quarrelling over a piece of pie.—Harper's Bazar

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THE lazy man would like to wait and get up with the thermometer, these mornings. — *Yonkers Statesman.*



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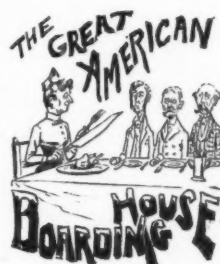
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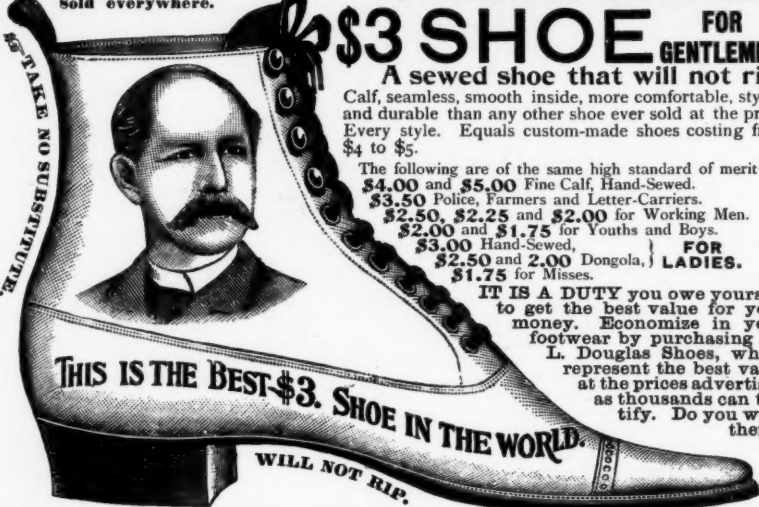
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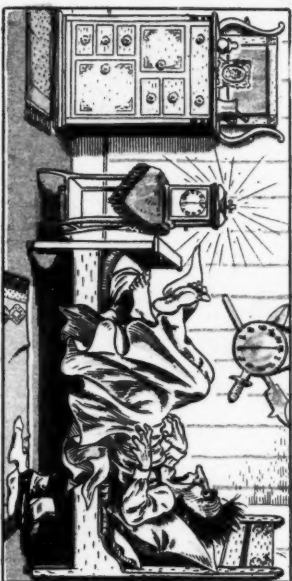
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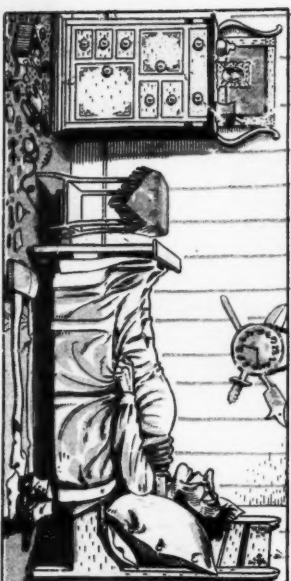
1) Mr. Subhub had to sprint each day, and often missed his train, yet on each succeeding morning he would oversleep again.



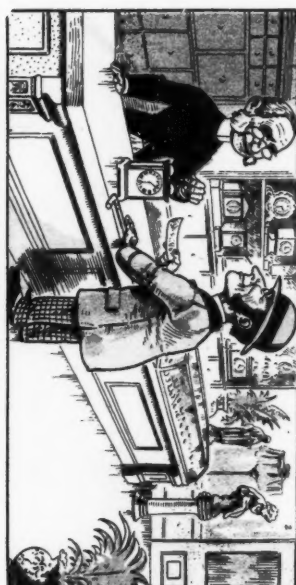
4) And sure enough at six o'clock it went off with a bang, which awakened Subhub with a start while loudly still it rang.



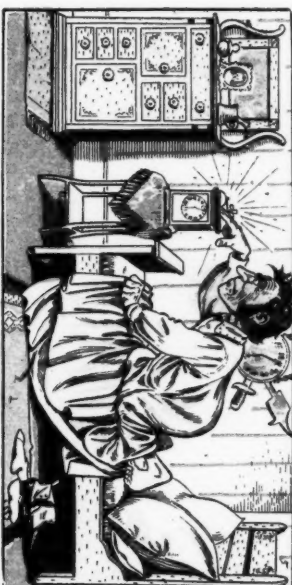
7) Now a brilliant idea struck him, since it still kept up its din; so he thrust it in a cupboard, where he firmly locked it in.



10) Its voice at last was quieted, — he 'd knocked it galley west; — And then, tired out, he sought his couch to snatch one moment's rest.



2) So he bought a handsome timepiece with a quarter-hour alarm, which, the jeweler assured him, would arouse him like a charm.



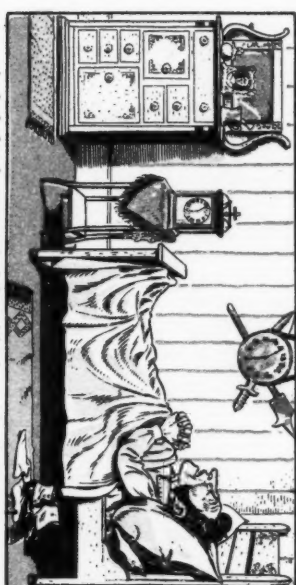
5) It rang and rang and rang so loudly and so long that Subhub tried to hush it with his finger on the gong;



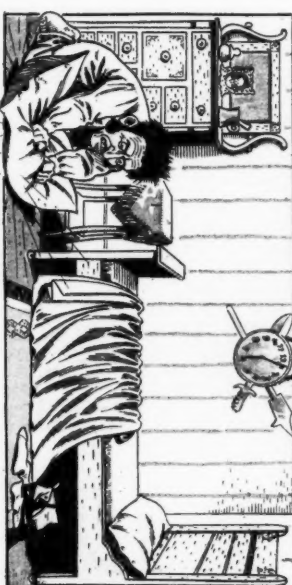
8) And climbed in bed, to lie till seven; "An hour's plenty time," He thought, "so bathe and dress and eat — oh, drat that dreadful chime!"



11) 'T was after eight when next he woke to catch that 8:10 train; I need not state that he 'as late and missed it once again.



3) And when he went to bed that night, he set the clock for six, And slept, secure of waking up, like fifty tons of bricks.



6) But, as the merry clapper kept a-whanging as before, He tried to drown its clangor with his pillow on the floor.



9) In wild despair he rushed downstairs, brought back the kitchen ax, With which he dealt that cursed clock disintegrating whacks.



12) And now the neighbors say: "Oh, did you hear it? such a pity! — The Subhub's moved last week into apartments in the city!"

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